

CHAPTER I

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE IMPROVEMENT--BACKGROUND

Why is the appearance of Woodfin important to its residents? Perhaps this appears to be a rhetorical question, but it is one which must be answered before criteria can be developed to identify those factors which enhance the appearance of the community and should be preserved, as well as those things which detract from the community's appearance and should be corrected.

Community appearance has a great impact on the quality of life of each community resident. Physicians believe that the appearance and form of the environment can influence self-expression and development of the individual. More concretely, the look of a community's surroundings is also important to its economic well-being, and to the economic well-being of its residents; deteriorating appearance may be directly tied to the decline of the business areas or the community's success in attracting desirable industry and providing jobs.

Private individuals and civic organizations have long recognized the importance of community appearance and have conducted many beautification projects, such as the annual paint-up/fix-up campaigns. Government, too, has recognized the importance of total community appearance for many years and has attempted to control it by planning for future growth and enacting ordinances to control development; however, these controls have generally been justified on the basis of health, safety, and morals, not aesthetics. Recently, communities have been enacting ordinances (with court support) which control the appearance of buildings and facilities solely on the basis of aesthetics.

The Highway Beautification Act of 1965 was one of the first Federal programs directed solely at aesthetics, although aesthetics had been one of many considerations in earlier renewal and housing programs. This program was not only intended for the conservation of beauty along federally funded highway projects but also to "restore" beauty through the control of roadside advertising and junk yards. The Highway Beautification Act has been followed by similar programs in various federal and State agencies. (See Appendix A.)